



Fairbanks North Star Borough

Mayor's Office

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MEMORANDUM

To: All FNSB Employees

From: Bryce Ward, Mayor  for BW

Date: March 22, 2020

Subject: Temporary Telecommuting Policy Guidance

Due to the current COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak, many employees are inquiring about the ability to work from home. The Borough is implementing temporary telecommuting arrangements for employees who are eligible and authorized, as provided below.

Eligibility and Criteria

Either an employee or the employee's supervisor may suggest telecommuting as a possible work arrangement when the employee's position is identified as being suited to such an arrangement, subject to meeting the criteria outlined in this policy. Employees considered for telecommuting must have a satisfactory performance record.

Some positions at the Borough require the employee to be physically present in the workplace; these employees are defined as essential onsite personnel and are to be determined by the director and approved by Human Resources or the Chief of Staff. Examples of essential onsite personnel include certain personnel from: Division of Animal Control; Transportation Department; and Department of Public Works (e.g. Solid Waste). Essential onsite personnel are expected to report to work as scheduled unless otherwise notified and are not eligible to telecommute under this policy. Regular leave policies and procedures should be followed for employees who are unable to report to work.

Employees who are approved to work from an alternative location temporarily may include those employees who are identified as essential offsite personnel, which are determined by the director and approved by Human Resources or the Chief of Staff, or those employees who support essential

personnel or perform crucial department functions. Should the current crisis warrant, the alternative location temporarily may include those employees who are identified as essential offsite personnel, which are determined by the director and approved by Human Resources or the Chief of Staff, or those employees who support essential personnel or perform crucial department functions. Should the current crisis warrant, the Borough may require or authorize additional employees to work from an alternate location; additional positions may be considered for telecommuting on a case-by-case basis.

Eligibility will be considered and determined in keeping with the following criteria:

1. Is the employee's current primary Borough worksite fit for occupancy?
 - a. If yes, proceed to question number 3;
 - b. If no, proceed to the next question.

2. Is there a way to make the employee's primary Borough worksite fit for occupancy without telecommuting (e.g., working from an alternate Borough location, working a flex shift)?
 - a. If yes, the employee is not eligible to telecommute;
 - b. If no, proceed to the next question.

3. Does the employee's department director believe the employee's telework will benefit the organization?
 - a. If yes, proceed to the next question;
 - b. If no, the employee is not eligible to telecommute.

4. Is the employee required to be physically present at work?
 - a. If yes, the employee is not eligible to telecommute;
 - b. If no, proceed to the next question.

5. Is the employee able to perform all or most of their duties from the proposed alternate location?
 - a. If yes, proceed to the next question;
 - b. If no, the employee is not eligible to telecommute.

6. Does the employee have a suitable alternate location with available technical resources (e.g.: IP bandwidth; telephone capabilities; data limits)?
 - a. If yes, proceed to the next question;
 - b. If no, the employee is not eligible to telecommute.

7. Is the employee willing to use their personal technical resources (e.g. internet, telephone) for work purposes at their own expense?
 - a. If yes, proceed to the next question;
 - b. If no, the employee is not eligible to telecommute.

8. Does the department the employee works for perform an identified essential Borough function?
 - a. If yes, proceed to the next question;
 - b. If no, the employee is not eligible to telecommute.

9. Does the employee perform an essential Borough function, provide significant administrative support to an essential Borough function, or otherwise perform duties that are crucial to the operation of the department?
 - a. If yes, proceed to the next question;
 - b. If no, the employee is not eligible to telecommute.

10. Is the employee's director able to provide the employee with the necessary resources to work remotely (e.g., laptop, printer)?
 - a. If yes, proceed to the next question;
 - b. If no, the employee is not eligible to telecommute.

11. Has the employee reviewed this policy, the Telecommuting Agreement, and is the employee willing to enter into the Telecommuting Agreement?
 - a. If yes, the employee and director may proceed to enter into a Telecommuting Agreement, subject to approval of the Human Resources Director or Chief of Staff.
 - b. If no, the employee is not eligible to telecommute.

Employees and their supervisors should be proactive in preparing for these circumstances to ensure employees have the resources necessary to work from an alternative location.

- **Equipment, Supplies, and Technical Resources**

The Borough will supply the employee with equipment that is both appropriate and necessary (e.g., laptop, printer), as well as office supplies (e.g., pens, paper). Consistent with Borough policy, Borough equipment and supplies must be used for work purposes, except incidental personal use (FNSB No. 40.01).

The employee is responsible for maintaining adequate utilities and technical resources, to include broadband internet (cable, DSL, satellite, or similar) and telephone services (landline or cellular) with functional data capabilities, at employee's own expense, unless specifically provided otherwise in this policy. The employee is further responsible for maintenance and repairs to any non-Borough equipment, materials, furnishings, or fittings used as part of the employee's telework.

The Borough will be responsible for employer-provided equipment repair and maintenance. The Borough will also reimburse the employee for business-related expenses, such as long-distance phone calls that incur charges in excess of employee's normal plan, that are reasonably incurred in carrying out the employee's job.

Employees are responsible for making arrangements with their supervisor for checking Borough phone voicemail or forwarding the employee's Borough phone to the employee's alternative worksite during working hours.

Temporary Nature

These arrangements are expected to be short term, and the Borough will continue to monitor guidance from health officials as well as the need for and effectiveness of alternate work arrangements. Employees should not assume any specified period of time for telecommuting or that telework will continue to be available, and the Borough may require employees to return to regular, in-office work.

All Borough-issued equipment and unused office supplies shall be promptly returned to the employer at the end of the telecommuting assignment.

Safety, Injuries, and Driving

For those approved to telework from home, employees are expected to maintain their home workspace in a safe manner, free from safety hazards. The Borough will not be responsible for costs associated with the setup of the employee's home workspace, such as remodeling, furniture, or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the home workspace. If an employee feels that they do not have a suitable home workspace, the employee must inform their director at the time telecommuting is being considered for that employee or position.

Injuries sustained by an employee in a home worksite location, or other approved alternate work location, must be reported on the employee injury and incident form: <http://www.fnsb.us/hr/Pages/ReportClaims.aspx> Telecommuting employees are responsible for notifying the employer of such injuries as soon as practicable.

Employees approved for telecommuting are not expected to have work-related visitors. An employee approved to telecommute who discovers a need to have work-related visitors to a non-Borough facility worksite must have the visit approved by the employee's director in advance. The employee remains liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to the employee's home worksite.

No personal vehicle use on behalf of the Borough is permitted unless expressly authorized by the employee's director and in keeping with the FNSB's motor vehicle driving policy (FNSB No. 80.01).

Security

Consistent with the Borough's expectations of and policies regarding information security for employees working at the office, telecommuting employees are expected to ensure the protection of Borough and customer information used or accessible from

their alternate worksite. Steps may include the use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password maintenance, and any other measures appropriate for the job and the environment.

Public Records and Records Retention

Employees approved to telecommute must adhere to the same public records and Borough records retention policies that apply when the employee is at their normal Borough worksite.

Time Worked

Telecommuting employees who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act will be required to accurately record all hours worked, and are expected to use the Borough's time-keeping system to the greatest extent possible. Hours worked in excess of those scheduled per day and per workweek require the advance approval of the employee's supervisor. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the immediate termination of the Telecommuting Agreement and possible disciplinary action.

Other Considerations

Telecommuting is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate childcare; the focus of the arrangement must be on job performance and meeting work-related demands. Prospective telecommuters are encouraged to discuss expectations of telecommuting with family members prior to entering into a telecommuting arrangement.

Attachment: FNSB Telecommuting Agreement

cc: FNSB Bargaining Unit Representatives

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